

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KIGALI 01017 170959Z

ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 ACDA-07 IO-13 /084 W

-----064169 171010Z /21

R 160643Z AUG 77

FM AMEMBASSY KIGALI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5142

INFO AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PDIP, KN

SUBJECT: THAW IN RELATIONS WITH NORTH KOREANS

1. IN CASE IT MAY FORM PIECE OF LARGER PICTURE, WISH TO RECORD THAT THIS EMBASSY'S RELATIONS WITH LOCAL NORTH KOREAN REPS HAVE SUDDENLY TAKEN WARMER TURN. AFTER YEARS OF ICY HOSTILITY, HIGHLIGHTED BY SUCH INCIDENTS AS KOREAN CHAUFFEUR'S SPITTING OUT WINDOW OF AMBASSADOR'S CAR AT DCM HIGGINS, KOREANS NOW SEEM PREPARED TO BE AT LEAST CIVIL TOWARD US.

2. ITEM: DURING FAREWELL CEREMONIES AT AIRPORT AUG 2 FOR PRES. BAGAZA, KOREAN AMBASSADOR DJEUH YEUNG OUN SMILED IN RESPONSE TO MY CASUAL "BONJOUR" AND ALMOST OFFERED TO SHAKE MY HAND AS WE STOOD SIDE-BY-SIDE IN PROTOCOL LINE.

3. ITEM: AT FRG-HOSTED DIPCORPS FAREWELL LUNCHEON AUG. 10 FOR PRC AMBASSADOR, KOREAN AMB. SHOOK MY HAND AND MY WIFE'S, THEN SAT DOWN WITH ME AT SMALL TABLE (TOGETHER WITH BURUNDI AMB AND ZAIRE CHARGE) AND THROUGH HIS INTERPRETER ACTUALLY INITIATED OCCASIONAL SMALL TALK

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ABOUT U.S. IMPORTS OF RWANDAN, BURUNDI, AND COLOMBIAN (SIC) COFFEE. HE MADE NO RPT NO SIMILAR EFFORTS WITH OUR AFRICAN TABLE-MATES, NOR DID THEY ATTEMPT TO ENGAGE HIM.

4. I MENTIONED THIS REMARKABLE CHANGE IN ATTITUDE TO RWANDAN FONMIN AT DINNER AT MY HOME LAST NIGHT, ASKING WHETHER HE HAD NOTED MORE CONSTRUCTIVE, LESS PROPAGANDISTIC BEHAVIOR

ON NORTH KOREANS' PART. HE AFFIRMED THAT THERE WAS LESS DPRK PROPAGANDA FLOATING AROUND KIGALI THESE DAYS (I BELIEVE THIS IS TRUE) BUT GRUMBLED KOREANS STILL WEREN'T DOING ANYTHING VERY CONSTRUCTIVE (THEY ARE IN FACT BUILDING CENTER FOR MRND JEUNESSE BUT FONMIN BELITTLED THIS GESTURE).

5. COMMENT: I AM NOT, BY THE WAY, SEEKING TO FOSTER PUBLIC IMAGE OF US-DPRK CORDIALITY, ALTHOUGH I PERSONALLY WELCOME AN END TO GLARING HOSTILITY BETWEEN OUR TWO EMBASSIES. KOREAN AMB AND I ARE CONDEMNED BY PROTOCOL TO STAND TOGETHER AT MOST PUBLIC EVENTS, AND OBVIOUS ENMITY HAS BEEN MUCH COMMENTED ON BY OTHERS (UP TO NOW, ONLY U.S. HAS BEEN TREATED WITH SUCH INCIVILITY).

6. I JUDGE NEVERTHELESS THAT, UNLESS THEY'RE ABOUT TO TAKE PLUNGE IN WORLD COFFEE MARKET, CHANGE OF ATTITUDE ON KOREANS' PART IS DELIBERATE POLICY SHIFT AIMED AT PROJECTING MORE "REASONABLE" IMAGE FOR LOCAL CONSUMPTION. WOULD APPRECIATE APPROPRIATE DEPT. GUIDANCE, BEYOND OUR MERELY BEING CIVIL IN RETURN.

7. DRAFTER: AMB.
CRIGLER

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